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Group Art Unit 1755

Re: Application Serial No.: 10/766,702
Filing Date: January 28, 2004
Inventors: Longin B. Greszczuk
Examiner: David M. Brunzman
Group Art Unit: 1755
Attorney Docket No.: BOE-002A
Title: Moisture Resistant Coatings for Composites and Components

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Notes: Please see attached Amendment in the above matter.

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICERECEIVED
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Applicants: Longin B. Greszczuk

Application Number: 10/766,702 AUG 24 2005

Filing date: 01/28/2004

Group Art Unit: 1755

Attorney Docket Number: BOE-002A

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MOISTURE RESISTANT COATINGS FOR COMPOSITES AND COMPONENTS

THE COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS

P O BOX 1450

ALEXANDRIA

VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

This Amendment is responsive to the Office Action of June 23, and is timely filed by fax within the 3 month period for response.

AMENDMENTIn the Claims

A separate accompanying document is an unmarked-up copy of the claims after amendment. Claims 1, 13 and 15 have been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A coating composition for applying to substrates subject to incursion of moisture to resist [resisting] moisture penetration into the [a] substrate coated with the coating, the coating composition prepared by a process comprising:

[(a)] heating and blending together a mixture comprising waxes and paraffins [;]
and dispersing [(b) a] powdered metal, metal oxide, or metal carbide [dispersed]
throughout the mixture; and

cooling the mixture to form a waxy solid with powdered metal, metal oxide or metal carbide dispersed therein,

wherein the waxy solid is substantially free of entrained gasses; wherein heating need not be applied to render a coating of the composition homogeneous when applied to a substrate; and wherein [the coating reduces] moisture incursion [gain] into the [by a substrate] coated [therewith] substrate is reduced by at least about 50% as compared to an uncoated substrate under the same temperature and moisture conditions.

- 13 (Amended) The coating composition of Claim 1, wherein the amount of powdered metal or metal oxide comprises from about 5 to about 15 wt.%, based on the weight of the [polymeric] mixture.
- 15 (Amended) A coating composition resistant to penetration by moisture, the composition substantially preventing moisture absorption into a composite otherwise subject to moisture absorption under hot and wet ambient conditions, the composition comprising:
- a) a mixture of esters of fatty acids and aliphatic hydrocarbons having a melting point in the range from about 170 to about 190°F; and
 - b) a powdered additive in sufficient amount to permit uniform heating of a mass of the composition and to provide compression of a mass of the composition upon cooling sufficient to substantially exclude occluded gasses from a cooled mass
- wherein the composition comprises a waxy solid at room temperature; and wherein when the molten composition is applied to a substrate to form a coating, the coating does not require heating to render the coating homogeneous.

Response

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's careful review of the prior art and the application.

As understood, the pending 21 original claims stand rejected as follows:

1. Claims 1-3, 8-17, 20, 21 as anticipated under 35 USC 102(b) due to the Annan patent;
2. Claims 4-7, 18, 19 under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious due to the Annan patent in view of the Davidian patent;
3. Claims 1-21 provisionally rejected due to claims 1-20 of copending application 10/816,384 under the prohibition against double patenting;
4. Claims 1-7, 9 and 12-14 under the prohibition against double patenting (of the obviousness of invention type), based on claims 1-7, 8, 11-13 of copending application 10/816, 384;

5. Claims 8, 10, 15-21 12-14 under the prohibition against double patenting (of the obviousness of invention type), based on claims 8, 10 and 14-20 of copending application 10/816, 384;
6. Claim 11 under the prohibition against double patenting (of the obviousness of invention type), based on claim 10 of copending application 10/816, 384; and
7. Claim 13 under 25 USC 112 for lacking antecedent basis for "polymeric" as applied to mixture.

The Prior Art

The prior art cited comprises two references:

A. Annan

The Annan patent issued in 1920 and relates to a wax composition used in sealing stone or concrete floors. Annan teaches "a new composition of matter" consisting of "combining mineral, vegetable and animal waxes with or without coloring matter such as soluble oil dyes or stains or chromic oxid . . ." Col. 1 lines 35-42. In column 2 of the patent, two examples of the composition are set forth. None contain particulates such as powdered metal, metal oxide or metal carbide. The patent teaches that the composition must be heated to about 212F to melt it before being applied, and the porous stone or concrete surface to which it is applied must be heated to about 300F so that the heated mixture can penetrate to about ½ inch below the surface.

B. Davidian

This patent relates to a protective coating for metals that is a flowable mixture of wax particulates with melting point 120-350 F, that also contains finely divided inert filler and/or anti-corrosion agents. Importantly, it is NOT a waxy solid with powder dispersed throughout. It is a dispersion of finely divided wax particles in oil. Specifically, the patent states at col. 1, lines 50-63:

The invention is directed to a protective coating composition for metal articles which is based on the novel concept that a dispersion of finely divided wax particles in oil will solidify to form a solid, tough, adherent coating when heated to a temperature above the melting point of the wax. In general, the coating composition consists of 10% to 90% by weight of finely divided wax particles having a melting point in the range of 120° to 350° F., and a particle size in the range of 0.5 to 400 microns, and 10% to 90% of a liquid oil.

The composition can also contain up to 60% by weight of finely divided particles of an inert filler, and up to 60% by weight of finely divided particles of an anti-corrosive agent.

The coating is exemplified as applied to metals, in Example 2. The coating is stated throughout the patent as being one that prevents corrosion by protecting the metal surface. There is no teaching or suggestion to apply it to a porous surface subject to in-migration of water or water vapor, to prevent the in-migration.

Anticipation (102(b)) of Claims 1-3, 8-17, 20, 21

Applicants respectfully submit that these Claims as filed, and as now amended, are not anticipated by Annan because the MPEP states that each and every element (or "limitation") of the claim must be found in the prior art reference for anticipation. See MPEP 2131:

"A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987). >"When a claim covers several

The claims each require as a recited element that there is a "powdered metal, metal oxide or metal carbide dispersed throughout the mixture". This not referenced anywhere in Annan. Annan speaks to waxes and soluble dyes but does not mention particulates of any kind. This is not surprising since his composition is intended to penetrate into the pores of stone or concrete and particulates may not penetrate these pores but remain as a gritty surface contaminant. See, for example the last line in column 2 to end of column 3 describing how the floor and composition are both heated up to facilitate penetration of the wax mixture into the top ½ inch of the floor surface. The Examiner conceded in his

35 USC 103 rejection of other claims that Annan does not teach the dispersed powder, and so the Examiner relied on Davidian for that teaching. In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the grounds for rejection.

Obviousness Claims 4-7, 18, 19

The Office action cites Annan in view of Davidian for teaching or suggesting the dispersed metal powder not shown in Annan by itself. In order to combine the references an expectation of success must found in the references themselves. MPEP 2143:

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations.

The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art, not in applicant's disclosure. *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

Here, however, one reference deals with a stone/concrete floor sealant, and the other with an anti-corrosion coating for metals. These are in different art areas and cannot reasonably be combined. If the Examiner is relying upon the level of skill in the art to combine the references, then Applicants point out that such is not permitted under MPEP 2144:

"There are three possible sources for a motivation to combine references: the nature of the problem to be solved, the teachings of the prior art, and the knowledge of persons of ordinary skill in the art." *In re Rouffet*, 149 F.3d 1350, 1357, 47 USPQ2d 1453, 1457-58 (Fed. Cir. 1998) (The combination of the references taught every element of the claimed invention, however without a motivation to combine, a rejection based on a *prima facie* case of obvious was held improper.). The level of skill in the art cannot be relied upon to provide the suggestion to combine references. *Al-Site Corp. v. VSI Int'l Inc.*, 174 F.3d 1308, 50 USPQ2d 1161 (Fed. Cir. 1999).

Looking at the two other criteria of the three given in MPEP 2144, quoted above, for combining references, there is no explicit teaching here to combine Annan and Davidian in either of the references. That cannot be disputed. As to the "nature of the problem to be solved", Davidian solves a different problem. He looks at improving corrosion resistance of metals, and not at floor sealing to prevent disintegration of the floor. Neither of the patents deals with moisture penetration into substrates subject to such penetration at all. Accordingly, the combination is inappropriate.

Nonetheless, without waiving this position, Applicant will distinguish Davidian, as Annan is already adequately distinguished above for lacking the powdered component of the invention. While Davidian shows a wax combination with a powdered additive, the patent requires mixing oil and the wax at room temperature, to provide a dispersion. The dispersion is applied to the metal article to be protected, and heated to above the wax melting point to form a coating. Then, upon cooling, the coating will solidify "almost instantaneously" to form an adherent coating on the metal surface. See Column 3 lines 29-40:

In preparing the coating composition of the invention, the finely divided wax particles are mixed with the oil at room temperature to provide a dispersion. The dispersion is then applied to the article to be protected, and heated to a temperature above the melting point of the wax, generally in the range of 130° to 400° F., and preferably in the range of 180° to 250° F., to provide a homogeneous liquid coating. The heated liquid will solidify virtually instantaneously when cooled to ambient temperature to provide a solid adherent, homogeneous, corrosion resistant coating on the article.

Accordingly, the Davidian composition *must be heated after application to the surface to above the wax melting point to permit the wax to dissolve in the oil and form a homogeneous coating*. Prior to such heating of the coated metal, the wax is merely dispersed in the oil-wax mixture.

In the invention, the heating step of Davidian after application of the coating is not necessary at all. The amended claims now make that clear, and the invention as exemplified in the Examples, make that clear. Once the molten composition of the claimed invention is applied to the substrate subject to moisture absorption, no further heating is needed: it forms a moisture resistant barrier on the surface upon cooling and solidifying.

This is an important distinction because it is not practical or possible to apply heat to certain substrates to melt wax as in Davidian. Indeed, heating may cause product damage, if the substrate is a composite or other plastic, and is often undesirable. Further, applying heat often raises safety issues both as to personnel, and as to risk of fire because waxes are flammable. Nowhere does Davidian teach or suggest dispensing with the post-application heating step. It is clearly necessary in his coating because his composition is not homogeneous prior to heating; it is merely a dispersion of waxes in oil at room temperature. In the claimed invention, it is a waxy solid at room temperature. Further, the composition is not applied to metals but to porous substrates, some of which are exemplified at paragraph [13] of the application, but of course the composition is also useful in other porous substrates subject to moisture or water vapor incursion.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the basis for rejection, and allowance of Claims 4-7, 18, and 19.

Pending Claims

The claims have been amended as shown above and in the attached clean copy of the Claims.

As can be seen, the independent claims 1 and 15 have been amended, and the "polymeric" language deleted from Claim 13.

Claim 1 is in product by process form, as permitted under the rules. In the process of production, waxes and paraffins are heated together and blended under heat. The powder is dispersed within the blend. Upon cooling, the product at room temperatures (about 15-

25 Celsius) is a waxy solid. This feature is not shown in any prior art reference cited. Referring to the Examples, the coating of the composition does not require heating after application to a substrate's surface to make it homogeneous, as in the case of the Davidian prior art, nor does the substrate have to be heated, as required in the Annan prior art. Further, the substrates are porous and subject to moisture incursion (water or water vapor) and this feature is not shown in Davidian. Claims 2-14 depend from Claim 1.

Claim 15 relates to a coating composition for coating composites to prevent or reduce moisture incursion. The composition requires that the added powder be sufficient to act to exclude gasses when the mixture is cooled and solidifies. This is not shown in any prior art cited. The coating of the composition requires no post-application heating to make it homogeneous, as in the case of Davidian. Claims 16-21 depend from Claim 15.

Accordingly, applicants respectfully submit that the claims are all patentable.

Double Patenting Provisional rejections

Applicant points out that the claims in the copending applications are neither the same nor obvious in view of each other. A major and specific difference is that while the compositions of this application prevent moisture incursion, those of 10/ 816,384 relate to a composition that prevents moisture loss from the substrates. If it is the examiner's position that preventing moisture incursion is the same as preventing moisture loss, he is mistaken. For example, skin moisturizers prevent moisture loss from skin, but are formulated to not provide a barrier, or not to prevent, moisture from migrating into the skin, through the moisturizer composition coating on the skin. It does not necessarily follow then that a composition that prevents moisture loss also necessarily prevents moisture in-migration through the composition. Much depends upon the chemistry of the composition. Since the grounds for double patenting rejection are provisional at this point, applicant reserves the right to respond further, in the event the Examiner does not reconsider and withdraw this basis for claim rejection.

Explanation of Claim Amendments

For the record, the claim amendments were not made to overcome the prior art. Applicant believes that the claims as presented were patentable over the cited art. The amendments were made to recite inherent properties of the compositions to permit more ready determination of whether other compositions fall within the scope of these claims.

Respectfully submitted,



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Certificate:

The above signature hereby certifies that this document and its attachments were faxed to Examiner David M. Brunsman at facsimile number 703 872 9306 on August 24, 2005.